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SUBJECT: IRAQI SPEAKER AGREES THAT POLITICAL LEADERS MUST MEET TO REACH NATIONAL COMPACT

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) The Ambassador told the Speaker of the Council of Representatives (CoR) Dr. Mahmoud Mashhadani September 11 that, for an agreement to be reached on key issues (e.g., federalism, De-Ba'athification, militias) there will need to be a "package deal" or a national compact involving compromises from all sides. The Speaker agreed with the assessment that the key political bloc leaders will need to meet at a possible retreat to reach an understanding. The Speaker said that an early October meeting might be feasible in Amman. Mashhadani said he would raise this suggestion for a retreat at the National Policy Council meeting that same night.

¶2. (C) Regarding the recent controversy over the region formation law, Mashhadani said that federalism is very dangerous because it cannot be controlled. He agreed that the passage of a region formation by a simple majority would not be good; it needs broad agreement. The Ambassador said the National Policy Council should reach an agreement at its meeting not to move forward on federalism until there is a "package deal" agreement between the major political groups.

¶3. (C) Mashhadani expressed concern over Iraqiyya's political position since Izzat al-Shabander, who represented the bloc at the September 7 Political Committee meeting, called for a schedule for MNF-I withdrawal of MNF-I. Mashhadani claimed that he helped push back the suggestion because such a withdrawal would create a security gap.

¶4. (C) The Ambassador expressed the USG concern over certain key points in the draft Independent High Electoral Commission law to help preserve its independence: (a) the removal provision for commissioners should be higher than just a simple majority; (b) the President, Prime Minister, and Speaker should be on nominating committee; and (c) commissioners should not be allowed to accept public office (except in academia) within three years after their term is over. The Speaker said he would transmit these points to the CoR's Legal Committee.

KHALILZAD